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MEDIA RELEASE

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Additional university places welcomed

Today's announcement that an additional 20,000 university places would be funded by the Federal Government has been welcomed by Be.Bendigo (Bendigo's Chamber of Commerce) as an important step in addressing the long-term solution to ongoing skills shortages in regional areas.

Universities will need to bid for the extra places, with 10,000 becoming available from 2023, and the requirement that they will be allocated to students from low-income backgrounds, First Nations people and those from rural and remote areas or with a disability.

Rob Herbert, CEO of Be.Bendigo, welcomed the indication that they would be targeted at areas of skills shortages such as education, health, engineering and technology.

"Regional areas – Bendigo included – are currently experiencing a severe shortage of professional and highly skilled technical workers across a range of areas, including those identified by Federal Education Minister, Jason Clare", he said.

"Our future outlook shows that there will continue to be an increasing need for Health Care professionals; we already have a shortage of teachers; and previous studies have indicated that there is a need – and business growth opportunities attached – to increasing the number of individuals with engineering and technology qualifications and knowledge."

"The decision to target underrepresented groups should provide increased opportunities for universities such as La Trobe to cater for the growing needs of our region, and ensure that more local students have the ability to study and build fulfilling careers close to home", Mr Herbert concluded.

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